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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/PD, AF/W, ECA/A/E/AF
POSTS FOR ABUJA, CPAO, CAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EXPLORING THE AFRO-HISPANIC CONNECTION IN NIGERIA

1. SUMMARY: In a fitting tribute to National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15), the US Consulate, Lagos, hosted its first ever function to mark the occasion on October 14. END SUMMARY.

2. The theme of the program, dubbed "Exploring the Afro-Hispanic Connection: A Celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2003," was hosted by CG Hinson-Jones, and included a program of music, art appreciation, food appreciation as well as the screening of an educational movie at the Consul General's residence. Program goals included addressing issues of diversity inclusion, an important theme as Nigeria struggles to establish a pluralist Democracy.

3. Guests of honor, numbering over 200 in total, were represented by the international diplomatic community, the local and national Nigerian political establishment, Lagos-area business leaders, academicians, local artists, US citizens and mission employees.

4. The keynote speaker for the event, the Honorable Michael Olayemi Cardoso, Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State, highlighted the Lagos-Hispanic connection by citing the historical nexus between both in the Lagos-area. Mr. Cardoso also announced the partnership between Lagos and the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, an initiative that will provide an important building block for Nigerian outreach and business development in South America.

5. Key U.S.-Nigerian Mission Performance Plan objectives were addressed as part of the program, most notably focusing on ideas to improve economic ties between Nigeria and other countries.

6. Recommendation: The US Consulate, Lagos, encourages the promotion and adoption of more National Hispanic Heritage Month programming for 2004 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, post will expand programming next year to include Mission Performance Plan objectives HIV/AIDS, corruption and democratization.

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